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Resolution adopted by the Human Rights Council on 22 June 2017

35/10. Accelerating efforts to eliminate violence against women: engaging men and boys in preventing and responding to violence against all women and girls

The Human Rights Council,

Reaffirming the obligation of all States to promote and protect all human rights and fundamental freedoms, and reaffirming also that discrimination on the basis of sex is contrary to the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Convention on the Rights of the Child,

Reaffirming also the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, and the outcomes of their review conferences, and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples,

Recalling all relevant resolutions of the Human Rights Council, the Commission on Human Rights, the General Assembly and the Security Council and the relevant resolutions and agreed conclusions of the Commission on the Status of Women, which, inter alia, affirmed that all forms of violence against women and girls must be prevented, condemned and eliminated,

Recalling also its resolution 32/19 of 1 July 2016, entitled "Accelerating efforts to eliminate violence against women: preventing and responding to violence against women and girls, including indigenous women and girls", and General Assembly resolution 71/170 of 19 December 2016, entitled "Intensification of efforts to prevent and eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls: domestic violence",

Welcoming General Assembly resolution 70/1 of 25 September 2015, entitled "Transforming our world: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development", including the commitment of all States to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of all women

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and girls, and to eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres,

Acknowledging the important role played by regional conventions, instruments, declarations and initiatives to combat violence against women and girls,

Taking note with appreciation of the World Health Organization global plan of action to strengthen the role of the health system within a national multisectoral response to address interpersonal violence, in particular against women and girls, and against children, building on existing work of the Organization, in particular its call for the prevention and elimination of all forms of sexual and other forms of gender-based violence in public and private life,

Taking note of the work of the High-level Working Group on the Health and Human Rights of Women, Children and Adolescents,

Expressing deep concern about the continued prevalence of violence against all women and girls in all its different forms and manifestations worldwide, and re-emphasizing that violence against women and girls violates, abuses or impairs their human rights and, as such, is completely unacceptable,

Recognizing that violence against women and girls is rooted in historical and structural inequality in power relations between women and men, which further reinforce gender stereotypes and barriers to women's and girls' full enjoyment of their human rights, and that all forms of violence against women and girls constitute a major impediment to their full, equal and effective participation in society, the economy and political and individual decision-making, as well as in leadership roles, hindering them from the exercise and enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms on the basis of equality with men,

Reiterating the need to intensify efforts at all levels to prevent and eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls in the public and private spheres, including the need to challenge gender stereotypes and the negative social norms, attitudes and behaviours that underlie and perpetuate such violence,

Recognizing the particular risk of violence faced by all women and girls who suffer multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, and stressing the urgent need to address all forms of violence and discrimination against them,

Expressing concern at institutional and structural discrimination against women and girls, such as laws, policies, regulations, programmes, administrative procedures or structures, services and practices that directly or indirectly restrict access to institutions, property and landownership, nationality, health care and services, education, employment and access to credit, which negatively affect their empowerment and increase their vulnerability to violence, and compound the violence experienced,

Recognizing that violence against women is a manifestation of gender inequality and discrimination against women and girls, and can impede their economic independence and impose direct and indirect short- and long-term costs on society and individuals, including, as relevant, lost economic output and the psychological and physical impact thereof, as well as expenses relating to health care, the legal sector, social welfare and specialized services,

Recognizing also that those who are exposed to or experience violence in childhood are at increased risk of becoming perpetrators of violence against women and girls, and therefore recognizing the need to prevent and eliminate violence against women and children in order to help to stop the intergenerational cycle of violence,

Expressing deep concern that, during times of armed conflict and post-conflict, forced displacement and humanitarian crisis situations women and girls face a heightened

risk of sexual and other forms of gender-based violence, and expressing concern at the lack of effective measures of accountability and redress as well as effective remedies, including access to health care and services, psychosocial support, legal assistance and socioeconomic reintegration services for victims of sexual violence,

Fully recognizing that everyone, including men and boys, benefits from the achievement of gender equality and that the negative impacts of gender inequality, discrimination and violence against women and girls are borne by society as a whole, and emphasizing, therefore, that men and boys, by taking responsibility themselves and working jointly in partnership with women and girls at all levels, are essential to efforts to prevent and eliminate all forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls,

Emphasizing the important role that men and boys can play in preventing and eliminating violence against women and girls, including by challenging gender stereotypes and the negative social norms, attitudes and behaviours that underlie and perpetuate such violence and further developing and implementing measures that reinforce non-violent actions, attitudes and values, and encouraging men and boys, alongside women and girls, as agents and beneficiaries of gender equality, to take an active part in efforts to prevent and eliminate all forms of violence and discrimination against women and girls,

Bearing in mind the important role that men and boys can play when developing and implementing policies, programmes and strategies for gender equality and for preventing and eliminating violence against women and girls, and in this regard recognizes United Nations and other strategies and initiatives that promote men's and boys' involvement in gender equality, such as the "HeForShe" campaign, as tools in raising awareness of the crucial roles and responsibilities that men and boys play in the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls,

Recognizing the importance of investment to close resource gaps for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, and that resources for gender equality initiatives for men and boys should build upon rather than compromise opportunities and resources for women and girls,

1. *Expresses outrage* at the persistence and pervasiveness of all forms of violence against women and girls worldwide;

2. *Recognizes* that violence against women and girls persists in every country in the world as a pervasive violation, abuse or impairment of human rights and is a major impediment to achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, sustainable development, peace, security and the internationally agreed development goals, in particular the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;[1]

3. *Stresses* that "violence against women" means any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women and girls, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life, including digital and online spaces, and notes the economic and social harm caused by such violence;

4. *Strongly condemns* all acts of violence against women and girls, whether these acts are perpetrated by State or non-State actors, and calls for the elimination of all forms of sexual and other forms of gender-based violence, including where perpetrated or condoned by the State;

[1] General Assembly resolution 70/1.

5. *Recognizes* the critical role of women and girls as well as of women's and youth organizations and organizations led by women and girls as agents of change, and in this regard urges States to meaningfully engage with women and girls as active and equal participants in the planning, design, implementation and monitoring of legislation, policies and programmes, including programmes aimed at engaging men and boys;

6. *Also recognizes* the critical role of men and boys in preventing and eliminating all forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls in both the public and private spheres, and urges States to design and implement national policies and programmes that address the roles and responsibilities of men and boys in the promotion of gender equality;

7. *Urges* States to condemn strongly and publicly all forms of violence against women and girls in all settings, public and private, and to refrain from invoking any custom, tradition or religious consideration to avoid their obligations with respect to its elimination, including by eliminating all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation;

8. *Continues to express particular concern* at the systemic and structural discrimination and violence faced by women human rights defenders of all ages, and calls upon States to fulfil their obligations to prevent violations and abuses against all human rights defenders, including through practical steps to prevent threats, harassment and violence, and to combat impunity by ensuring that those responsible for violations or abuses, including all types of gender-based violence and threats, committed by State or non-State actors, are promptly brought to justice through impartial investigations;

9. *Calls upon* States to take immediate and effective action to prevent violence against women and girls by:

(*a*) Fully engaging men and boys, alongside women and girls, including community and religious leaders, as agents and beneficiaries of achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls as a contribution to the elimination of violence against women and girls;

(*b*) Addressing the root causes of gender inequality, including gender stereotypes and negative social norms, attitudes and behaviours, and socioeconomic drivers of violence, and unequal power relations such as patriarchal norms that view women and girls as subordinate to men and boys and that normalize, condone or perpetuate discrimination and violence against women and girls;

(*c*) Designing, implementing and regularly monitoring the impact of national policies, programmes and strategies that address the roles and responsibilities of men and boys, including by transforming social-cultural norms and traditional and customary practices that condone violence against women and girls, counteracting attitudes by which women and girls are regarded as subordinate to men and boys or as having stereotyped gender roles that perpetuate practices involving violence or coercion, and aiming to ensure the equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men and girls and boys in unpaid care and domestic work, including through parental leave policies, and increased flexibility in working arrangements which would facilitate the equal sharing of responsibilities;

(*d*) Ensuring the promotion and protection of the human rights of all women and their sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences, including through the development and enforcement of policies and legal frameworks, and strengthening health systems that make quality comprehensive sexual and reproductive health-care services, commodities, information and education universally accessible and

available, including, inter alia, safe and effective methods of modern contraception, emergency contraception, prevention programmes for adolescent pregnancy, maternal health care, such as skilled birth attendance and emergency obstetric care, which will reduce obstetric fistula and other complications of pregnancy and delivery, safe abortion where such services are permitted by national law, and the prevention and treatment of reproductive tract infections, sexually transmitted infections, HIV and reproductive cancers, and recognizing that human rights include the right to have control over and to decide freely and responsibly on matters related to their sexuality, including sexual and reproductive health, free from coercion, discrimination and violence;

(*e*) Strengthening measures to prevent and eliminate violence against and victimization of women and girls living with, at risk of or affected by HIV, and integrating such measures into comprehensive HIV policies and programmes, while fully engaging men and boys to recognize that gender equality and positive social norms promote effective responses to HIV;

(*f*) Engaging, educating, encouraging and supporting men and boys to be positive role models for gender equality and to promote respectful relationships, to refrain from and condemn all forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls, to take responsibility and be held accountable for behaviour, including behaviour that perpetuates gender stereotypes, including misconceptions about masculinities that underlie discrimination and violence against women and girls, to increase their understanding of the harmful effects of violence for the victim/survivor and society as a whole, and to ensure that men and boys take responsibility for their sexual and reproductive behaviour;

(*g*) Developing and implementing educational programmes and teaching materials, including comprehensive sexuality education, based on full and accurate information, for all adolescents and youth, in a manner consistent with their evolving capacities, with appropriate direction and guidance from parents and legal guardians, with the active involvement of all relevant stakeholders, in order to modify the social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women of all ages, to eliminate prejudices and to promote and build decision-making, communication and risk reduction skills for the development of respectful relationships based on gender equality and human rights, as well as teacher education and training programmes for both formal and non-formal education;

(*h*) Developing, investing in and implementing evidence-based policies, strategies and programmes, and awareness-raising campaigns to promote respectful relationships, provide positive role models for gender equality and encourage men and boys, alongside women and girls, to see themselves as agents and beneficiaries of the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls;

(*i*) Enacting or strengthening and enforcing laws and policies to eliminate all forms of violence and harassment against women of all ages in the world of work, including sexual harassment, so as to promote the realization of women's and girls' economic rights and empowerment and to facilitate women's full and productive employment and contribution to the economy, including by engaging men and boys to recognize the societal and economic costs of violence and harassment;

(*j*) Building on evidence-based research and policy initiatives and legislative approaches that support the constructive engagement of men and boys in preventing violence against women and girls, including in primary prevention, prevention skill-building, group education, community outreach, mobilization and mass media campaigns and early childhood gender equality education programmes and curricula;

(*k*) Measuring the effectiveness of policies and programmes to prevent violence against women and girls and to address gender inequalities, including those aimed at engaging men and boys and understanding behavioural change, as well as establishing the

cost of violence against women and girls by collecting adequate and comprehensive disaggregated data and gender statistics to expose the costs of inaction, including through awareness-raising activities;

10. *Also calls upon* States to take immediate and effective action to respond to violence against women and girls and to protect all victims/survivors by:

(*a*) Ensuring that all initiatives on preventing and ending violence against women and girls aimed at engaging men and boys are designed and promoted with the aim of ensuring that the concerns of women and girls, their rights, their empowerment, their safety and their equal and meaningful participation in decision-making at all levels are prioritized;

(*b*) Ensuring that remedies for women and girls subjected to gender-based violence, whether judicial, administrative, policy or other measures, including shelters and protection orders, are women-centred, available, accessible, acceptable, age- and gender-sensitive and adequately address victims'/survivors' rights and needs, including by providing information and education on the importance of protecting confidentiality, preventing stigmatization, revictimization or further harm to victims, allowing reasonable time for women subjected to violence to come forward to seek redress if they choose, and ensuring reasonable evidentiary standards;

(*c*) Holding persons in positions of authority, such as teachers, religious leaders, traditional authorities, politicians and law enforcement officials, accountable for not complying with and/or upholding laws and regulations relating to violence against women and girls, in order to prevent and respond to such violence in a gender-sensitive manner, to end impunity and to avoid the abuse of power leading to violence against women and girls and the revictimization of victims/survivors of such violence;

(*d*) Taking practical and concrete steps, in law and in practice, to create a safe and enabling environment where women and girls can easily report incidents of violence and receive post-gender-based violence care, including by providing men and women, particularly law enforcement officials, health-care providers and other first responders, with human rights training to ensure services that are women-centred, responsive to trauma and free from discrimination or stigmatization, and that prevent re-victimization;

(*e*) Developing and implementing the establishment of rehabilitative services in order to encourage and bring changes in the attitudes and behaviour of perpetrators of violence against women and girls and to reduce the likelihood of reoffending, and to monitor and assess their impact and effect, while the safety, support and human rights of the victims/survivors remain their primary concern;

11. *Welcomes* the work of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, and takes note with appreciation of her reports;[2]

12. *Also welcomes* the panel discussion on violence against women and girls, held during the annual full-day discussion on women's human rights at the thirty-fifth session of the Human Rights Council, and requests the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to present a summary report on the discussion to the Council at its thirty-seventh session;

13. *Requests* the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, in consultation with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, the United Nations Population Fund and other United Nations funds, programmes and agencies, as well as Member States, international human rights mechanisms, civil

[2] A/HRC/32/42 and Corr.1 and A/HRC/35/30.

society organizations and other relevant stakeholders, to prepare a report before the thirty-eighth session of the Human Rights Council to review promising practices and lessons learned, existing strategies and United Nations and other initiatives to engage men and boys in promoting and achieving gender equality, in particular efforts to challenge gender stereotypes and the negative social norms, attitudes and behaviours that underlie and perpetuate violence against women and girls, and to make recommendations for further action by States and the international community in this regard;

14. *Decides* to continue its consideration of the issue of the elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls, its causes and consequences, as a matter of high priority, in conformity with its annual programme of work.

34th meeting
22 June 2017

[Adopted without a vote.]